
OPEN SPACE MATCHING GRANTS

MISSION

The Matching Grants Program is designed to assist non-profit organizations in Durham County, both inside and outside the city limits, in preserving open space lands and promoting new or improved recreational opportunities for citizens of Durham County. Grant funds help provide public lands and out door recreational facilities through citizen initiative, support and involvement.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Durham Open Space and Trails Commission (DOST), established by the Durham County Board of Commissioners, utilized the assistance of the Durham City/County Planning Department to appoint the Matching Grants Committee and form the Matching Grants Program.

Grants are awarded competitively on a yearly cycle beginning in August with advertisements and announcements in newspapers, newsletters and water bill enclosures. Completed applications are due in the County Budget Office at close of business on October 15. Applicants must provide at least one half of the project's cost and manage all aspects of the project to accommodate public accessibility. Grant awards are made to new permanent programs and expansions of existing programs that meet a wide range of service provision criteria.

Recommendations for funding are developed by the Matching Grants Committee of the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission for action by the Durham Board of County Commissioners. The County enters into a contract with the successful applicant organization and the project work begins in the spring with a maximum of eighteen months for completion. The completed project is managed and maintained for public use as agreed to by the contracted organization and may be inspected or visited on a yearly basis by a representative of the County.

The grant process consists of five steps as follow:

- qualifying as an applicant and project,
- preparing an application,
- receiving a grant award and contract,
- implementing the project,
- and performing continued responsibilities for maintenance of the grant project.

This is the third year that the Matching Grants Program has been funded in the General Fund. Prior to 2001 funds for the program were located under the Capital Improvements Plan. There is not a history of expenditures transferable to General Fund records. Since its inception in 1990 the program awarded \$836,828 in grants matched by \$1,188,340 in nonprofit organization funds.

2002-03 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed two projects funded and implemented during previous grant cycles.
- Continued monitoring thirty-five projects completed since the program began in 1990.
- Conducted Matching Grants Committee meetings to determine the guidance of the Committee on many issues related to completed projects and projects needing assistance to reach completion.
- The Committee also reported to and sought guidance from the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission.
- Committee members participated in all DOST activities as well as many other related conservation and recreation events.
- Conducted a grant cycle during the 2002 grant cycle year.
- Received four applications for consideration and engaged in the process of communication with these applicants concerning questions and grant specifics.
- Developed a final recommendation on this year's applications and forwarded the recommendation to the DOST.

2003-04 OBJECTIVES

- Continue work as a committee and program of the County to assist non-profit organizations in preserving open space lands and promoting new recreational opportunities for citizens of Durham County
- Implement the 2003 cycle of grant applications.
- Assist with the implementation of the grant programs being developed during this year.
- Continue mentoring and monitoring those projects completed in earlier years and currently being maintained by the grant recipients.